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Representatives Introduce Legislation to Promote Net Metering, Help End Our Dependence on Foreign Oil, Save Money

Washington, DC – Representatives Dennis Cardoza (D-CA) and Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) have introduced the SOLAR Act ([H.R. 2895](#)) to promote net metering, which encourages the use of renewable energy in homes and offices. The legislation will help save families money, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and move our country toward a clean energy economy. Net metering allows energy consumers the opportunity to produce their own power through solar panels and other renewable sources. When consumers produce excess power, they sell it to the utility company over the power grid. When they need additional power, they purchase it from the utility company off the grid. Net metering tracks the production and purchase, calculating the difference. Rep. Cardoza introduced the legislation and Rep. Luján is the lead cosponsor. As a New Mexico Public Regulation Commissioner, Rep. Luján was a strong proponent of similar net metering rules.

“When most people think about renewable energy, whether it is solar, wind or another source, they think about large solar arrays or wind farms topping mesas or filling vast lands,” said Rep. Luján. “But with the SOLAR Act, we can take big steps toward an energy independent future in homes and offices, with small wind turbines, smaller solar panels, or other small scale renewable energy generators. Such methods can provide the energy we need to power our homes, offices and much more. This legislation not only reduces our dependence on foreign oil, but also reduces energy costs for families while putting communities on a path towards a clean energy economy.”

This legislation, endorsed by the Solar Energy Industries Association, will cut through the bureaucratic red tape that is preventing many potential energy consumers from participating in a clean energy economy.

Currently, 42 states and the District of Columbia have adopted a net metering policy, but federal law does not provide any guidance. The SOLAR Act would remove barriers to solar energy usage and streamline the installation process. The legislation requires all states to adopt net metering standards that direct retail electric suppliers to make net metering available to retail customers. Customer-generators must be subject to the same rates, charges, contract terms and conditions for the sale of electricity as those who do not produce their own electricity. It also requires retail electric suppliers to provide customer-generators with a net metering device to measure the flow of electricity. Further, the SOLAR Act would prevent local and state governments from charging exorbitant permitting fees for solar energy installations. These provisions are imperative to supporting renewable energy development and paving the road to energy independence.

As a New Mexico Public Regulation Commissioner, Rep. Luján worked on similar net metering rules in 2006, that were ultimately included in the state's rules that govern utilities.

"All over New Mexico, homeowners and small businesses are investing in new renewable energy systems that allow them to generate their own clean electricity," said Rep. Luján in 2006 when the new rules were approved. "New Mexico has looked for ways to encourage energy self reliance and helped jumpstart a robust renewable energy services market."